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361 scanty knowledge, their population varies between 200 and 300.
161 Whereas there in the unexplored south organizational forms for
[621] larger numbers of people have evidently developed, the socio-
logical system of the Waika is organized for only the above-named
figure of a hundred village inhabitants; a surplus of births is
answered by village partition.

628 The politically independent villages are partners in war and
peace and for trading and visiting, and the momentary, frequently
changing relationships of the villages to one another give the
political situation in Waika territory its stamp. Let us first look
721 at the hostile relationships. Affairs involving women are for the
[583] most part the cause of war; if a wife is sought in other villages,
and if the offer is turned down, one resorts to abducting a woman.
Once there has been bloodshed in quarrels originating from this,
the war is self-perpetuating; the original cause has not been for-
gotten, to be sure, but because of its slight intensity in the con-
ceptual world it in no way suffices as a motive for the continuation
726 of the war. Rather, what does not permit breaking the chain of
attacks repeated at intervals of a few months, in which the enemy
men are killed, but the women abducted, /117/ is ideas and analogous
● 728 to blood revenge. Concluding peace is possible only when there has
been no bloodshed for a long period of time, and hostile relations
628 often last for generations. Thus Waika country is covered with a
network of hostile relationships of varying degrees, and, picking
a village at random, one can distinguish a series of villages that
are friendly, benevolently indifferent, neutral, sympathetic with
the enemy, and, finally, completely hostile. For no two villages,
[726] however, is this series completely identical; there are no ex-
tensive alliances; war is an affair of the individual village, and a
friendly village is aided only if there are personal reasons for
hostility. No Waika village is without an enemy, and because
of the many crisscrossings of the degrees of relationships the
political situation is extremely complicated. We therefore see
that even on the broadest social plane -- that of the people as
a cultural and linguistic whole -- there is a very pronounced

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A young woman cannot remain unmarried for a long time, but some manage to reject all their suitors for several years

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after puberty. A widow, especially a widow with children, sometimes remains alone forever after the death of her husband.

Making Peace

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When one settlement wishes closer friendship with another, it sends a messenger to offer more friendly terms.

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If the settlements are only "macana enemies," a messenger of the very settlement that takes the initiative might go, but if the settlements are "arrow enemies," then it is necessary to send a messenger from a settlement which is friendly with both of the settlements in question. The messenger who is a member of a settlement that is an "arrow enemy" would run the danger of being shot with an arrow before giving the message.

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Thus, two very hostile settlements might manage to suspend the raids between them. Later, they might agree not to fight any more should they see one another in a friendly settlement. Until they arrive at this accord, a neutral settlement friendly to both, when it is visited by people from one of these settlements hostile to each other, must send a message to the other, warning that they should not come so long as there are visitors from the hostile settlement in it. Still later they might agree to receive the visit of a small group of visitors from the other enemy settlement, for commercial purposes. From this time on the two settlements can undertake their negotiations directly, and friendships begin to form among their respective members.

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Then, when one settlement, out of good will, gives its own girls as wives to the men of the other settlement, it can be said that they have recovered; they have truly become good friends.

While the greater the number of persons involved in a dispute or a fight, the less the probability that the opposing bands will reach an understanding after a short time, the disputes within a settlement itself are in general settled quickly. Within a few months all will have been forgotten. /478/ Disputes between settlements which have not gone beyond macana fights are usually forgotten in a year or two. Disputes between settlements which have occasion to use arrows, especially if someone has

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● 728 been killed, might require a greater number of years to be reconciled. Disputes which have reached the proportions of regional wars are rarely forgotten within the same generation, since there is hardly any neutral settlement left by means of which peace negotiations can be made.

The Family

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606 A newly married couple may live in the settlement of the wife's parents or in that of the husband's parents. But if they decide to live in the settlement of the wife's parents, they cannot live in the same dwelling with them, because it is prohibited (taboo) for the husband to approach his mother-in-law. He can enter her house only when she is outside. He would not dare to come any closer to her than three or four meters. If the couple decides to live with the husband's parents, there are no such restrictions, since there is no prohibition against the daughter-in-law approaching her mother-in-law. Even suitors customarily lodge on the side opposite that of the house of their future mother-in-law, in their town.

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[578] The majority of the men have but one wife. Those who wish to, and are able to, may have two or more wives. This practice makes more acute the shortage of marriageable women and may be one of the principal causes of the fights over wives which are started by men who have remained without any.

When a man has more than one wife, his wives may live in the same house or in several houses in a row. They work together, but each one has her own property. Frequently they are sisters since a man is more likely to marry the sister of his wife than to find another wife elsewhere.

593 Within the family it is the man who exercises authority. I only know of one case where the woman gives orders in the house, and this because her husband is mentally deficient.

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- 628 close the door. I was able to take the bows and arrows from the
123 newcomers at the wharf. When the Yoeitjети arrived, their chief
628 asked me about the Bisheasetjети. I told him that the
123 Bisheasetjети did not wish to fight and that I already had their
bows. He let me take the bows of his men, and I shut them up
● 728 in one of our houses. Then the men of Yoeitjети and Bisheasetjети
came together at my house, without weapons, and assured each
other that they wished to be friends. All 31 of them slept to-
gether in my house (a little crowded, but comfortably). I offered
them the empty house next to mine, but they did not want to
have anything to do with it. (My house is well ventilated, /167/
having Venetian blinds all around and two shutter-doors.)

[437] On the following day the Yoeitjети left, after exchanging
their hammocks and bows with the Bisheasetjети for machetes,
clothing, matches, and other things. I was happy to see the
two aldeas come together and become friends, because neither
one of them wanted to fight.

721 The major effect of these raids, apart from the ten lives
722 they claimed, was that the Patanowā-tedi had to move fre-
861 quently from one site to another. The Monou-tedi, who were
raiding the Patanowā-tedi, were being raided intensively also.
They, too, had to move frequently to avoid the raids. Both
* [628] groups had to rely on allies to give them refuge during the
[32] dry season, the time of the year when raiding is most intense.
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[41] It will be apparent below how crucial allies are to villages
that are being raided frequently, and how agricultural
726 practices necessitate these allies. Finally, the events
622 discussed below will illustrate the degree to which consan-
* 628 guineal ties between mutually hostile villages are able to
mitigate the hostilities between these villages.

The war between Monou-tedi and
Patanowā-tedi

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722 After the Namowei-tedi group split at the site of
[62] Patanowā in the early '40s, the two factions entered into a
[36] period of hostility that lasted until one of the factions,
the present groups of Bisasi-tedi and Monou-tedi, moved out
of the area. Raiding between the two factions ceased after
1950, and each group entered into political alliances with un-
related neighboring villages.

* 723 In the middle '50s, a rapprochement between the two
574 factions was attempted. A few individuals from Monou-tedi
* 628 began visiting Patanowā-tedi, and one of them, Torokoikē, was
[58] given two wives by the Patanowā-tedi. The rapprochement, how-
[58] ever, was never effected and the political relationships between

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628 Patanowā-tedi and her two colonies, Monou-tedi and Bisaasi-
728 tedi, were generally of a suspicious nature; only a few
574 individuals trusted the members of the other group enough to visit their village.

786 By 1964 the Patanowā-tedi had become involved in a
728 particularly vicious war with a number of neighboring vil-
lages, and were badly in need of military assistance. Their
only allies were the Ashadowā-tedi, a large group living two
days' walk south of them. Consequently, the Patanowā-tedi
informed the Bisaasi-tedi that they were willing to make
peace with them. The Bisaasi-tedi extended a feast invi-
tation to the Patanowā-tedi to demonstrate their interest in
making peace and, in late November 1964 the entire village
of Patanowā-tedi arrived at Bisaasi-tedi to participate in
the feast. This marked the first time since 1940 that the
two groups as groups visited each other.

726 The Monou-tedi were not involved in the feast, but a
728 number of men from that village came to Bisaasi-tedi intend-
628 ing to abduct Patanowā-tedi women. They succeeded in captur-
574 ing seven women the day that the Patanowā-tedi arrived, and
took them back to Monou-tedi without being discovered. The
Patanowā-tedi men, enraged at the loss of seven women, sent
a party of men to Monou-tedi the following morning to recover
the women. The Patanowā-tedi men entered Monou-tedi and
forcibly took five of the seven women away from their captors.
The Patanowā-tedi retreated before actual shooting broke out
and returned to Bisaasi-tedi. The Monou-tedi were furious

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over the loss of the five women, and Ygnomand canons of ferocity dictated that this loss would have to be avenged. The Monou-tedi informed the Patanow-tedi that they were going to shoot them on sight the next time they met.

After the Patanow-tedi returned to Bisaasi-tedi they packed their possessions and left for home. The feast was cancelled, as the Patanow-tedi feared being ambushed by a Monou-tedi raiding party if they remained at Bisaasi-tedi. Before departing, the Patanow-tedi assured their hosts that they still wanted peace with them, no matter what the Monou-tedi eventually did.

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This illustrates dramatically the Ygnomand political philosophy that it is legitimate to take advantage of a weak village. The Monou-tedi, knowing that the Patanow-tedi were politically in need of allies, took advantage of this situation when they abducted the women. They also knew that the Bisaasi-tedi would not take Patanow-tedi's side in the dispute that was bound to follow, as too many of the Bisaasi-tedi had personal grudges against the Patanow-tedi. The Monou-tedi also knew that the Patanow-tedi were not likely to begin a war over this incident, as they already had more enemies than they could successfully withstand without allies. In short, the Monou-tedi knew that they stood a good chance of gaining women by abducting them from the Patanow-tedi without great risk of being shot by the latter. As the conclusion shows, they managed to obtain two women and did not get into a shooting war with the Patanow-tedi. However, their anger at

*628 would have been a display of weakness. They decided to
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578 challenge the Bisaasi-tedi to a club fight and settle their
grievances by that means. Ten days after Kakoma was taken
from Karidin⁵, the Monou-tedi men arrived at Bisaasi-tedi
and settled the dispute in a club fight. The Monou-tedi were
thoroughly trounced by the larger number of Bisaasi-tedi,
but they nevertheless demonstrated their potential and wil-
lingness to fight, thereby warning the Bisaasi-tedi that
they better not attempt to seize more women in the future.

The Bisaasi-tedi clearly had taken advantage of the
Monou-tedi numerical weakness and political needs to advance
their own ends.

726 In the first week of March 1965 the Patanow⁶-tedi
raided the Monou-tedi. They found the village site on the
Mavaca River deserted, so they crossed the river and followed
the trail taken by the Monou-tedi to their new garden. They
[622] caught the Monou-tedi headman outside the new garden and
killed him.

*628 This attack brought about an immediate rapprochement
• 728 between the Bisaasi-tedi and the Monou-tedi. Even Kpob⁷,
leader of one of Bisaasi-tedi's main factions, was furious
over this killing. Up to this point he was still interested
in making peace with the Patanow⁶-tedi, but this even tempo-
726 rarily changed his mind. Kpob⁷ ultimately led the revenge
raid against the Patanow⁶-tedi.

[644] The Monou-tedi burned the corpse of the slain headman
and sent small gourds of his ground bones to members of allied

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726 There were,
*621 however, two recognizable factions within this group; one
622 was led by Kqoblwā, who had many relatives in both Patanowā-
602 tedi and Monou-tedi, and the other was led by Paruriwā, who
had no consanguineal relatives in Patanowā-tedi, but many in
Monou-tedi. Paruriwā's group was linked to Kqoblwā's by a
number of marriage ties.

*621 Kqoblwā was the acknowledged leader of the entire
622 upper section of Bisassi-tedi, including Paruriwā's group,
although Paruriwā had some influence in the affairs of the
village. After the middle of the year, Paruriwā began to
emerge as leader in his own right, and began duplicating many
of the activities normally the prerogative of the village
headman. Thus, when Kqoblwā initiated a feast for members
[527] of an allied village, Paruriwā duplicated his efforts by
[574] sending out his own hunters to provide meat for the guests,
and furnished an equal amount of cultivated food, which he
disposed of from his own section of the village. Normally,
the headman sends out the hunters and disposes of the culti-
vated food from his own house. Paruriwā, by duplicating
Kqoblwā's efforts in these activities, announced that he was
a headman.

726 The emergence of Paruriwā as an important leader was
622 largely the result of his active prosecution of the war
*628 against the Patanowā-tedi. Kqoblwā, after he led one revenge
• [728] raid against the Patanowā-tedi, decided that he wanted to
remain neutral in the fighting and wanted to make peace with
the Patanowā-tedi. This led to a political vacuum within

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622 one real headman, Kqobñwñ. Thus, Faruriwñ had to separate
361 from Kqobñwñ's group to achieve a status equal to that of
627 Kqobñwñ.
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623 In July 1965 Kqobñwñ sent his brother-in-law, Kumanawñ,
622 to Patanowñ-tedi to inform them that his group did not intend
574 to raid the Patanowñ-tedi in the future. When Kumanawñ re-
turned to Bisassi-tedi, he brought two older people with him,
demonstrating that the Patanowñ-tedi trusted Kqobñwñ and were
anxious to promote good relations with his group. The older
couple brought the message that three young men from Patanowñ-
tedi were coming on a visit soon. Three days later the young
men, Hqokoivñ, Masiwñ, and Koiyeivñ, arrived. Faruriwñ's
group was visiting the Widokaiya-tedi, and when word reached
him that a delegation of Patanowñ-tedi had arrived at Bisassi-
tedi to visit Kqobñwñ, he and a group of men from Monou-tedi
immediately returned to Bisassi-tedi, intending to murder the
three visitors. Kqobñwñ, however, warned Faruriwñ and the
Monou-tedi that should they attempt to harm the visitors, he
and his followers would defend them with force. A crisis
developed out of this situation, and for a whole day Faruriwñ
and his Monou-tedi supporters debated the wisdom of their
plan. Finally, Faruriwñ decided to desist from the murders
[803] and even participated in a news chant with one of the
[806] Patanowñ-tedi--the father of his youngest wife. This empha-
sized Kqobñwñ's influence as a leader, and Faruriwñ decided
to move away from Kqobñwñ's group after this incident. The
Monou-tedi who were to participate in the murder of the three

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was killed in the incident. Manasinawā, his wife, and his daughter remained with Kaobawā's group, and he ultimately gave the daughter to Kaobawā for a second wife. Kaobawā still has her.

At this time, the groups, of Damowā and Kaobawā, respectively, were still at war with the Patanowā-teri, from whom they separated some fifteen years earlier. Damowā's group, after separating from Kaobawā's, attempted to make peace with the Patanowā-teri, as they were now vulnerable and could ill afford to remain on hostile terms with them. Damowā's group also made an alliance with the two Shamatai villages, which had given them cooperation when they staged the revenge treacherous feast discussed in the last chapter. For about five years relationships between Damowā's group and the Patanowā-teri were relatively amicable, but as the former's alliances with the Shamatai grew in strength, their relationship to the Patanowā-teri grew cool once again.

The Patanowā-teri then became embroiled in new wars with several villages on the Orinoco River and turned to Kaobawā's group for aid, hoping to patch up their old grievances and remain at peace. The first day I began my fieldwork marked the initiation of complete peace between Kaobawā's group and the Patanowā-teri: They were having a feast together in Bisaasi-teri. Damowā's group, the Monou-teri, were not participating in the feast, but a large number of men came anyway. They discovered a group of seven Patanowā-teri females outside the main village and could not resist the temptation: They forcefully took them back to Monou-teri. Later that day the Patanowā-teri men discovered that the women were missing, so they searched the neighborhood and found the tracks of the Monou-teri men at the site of the abduction, where signs of struggling abounded. The next morning they went to Monou-teri armed with clubs: They were bound to get their women back, but did not care to start another shooting war with the Monou-teri. They took five of the women away from the Monou-teri in a heated struggle, but had to pull back without the remaining two, unless they were willing to shoot to kill: The Monou-teri were determined to keep the other women at all costs.

The significance of this incident is this: The headman of Monou-teri realized that the Patanowā-teri would not risk getting into a shooting war with them since they already had more enemies than they could comfortably handle. Hence, this provided an excellent opportunity for the Monou-teri to abduct women with relatively little chance of getting shot in retaliation.

Damowā, the headman of Monou-teri, was angry because the Patanowā-teri had recovered so many of their women. He then threatened to ambush the Patanowā-teri when they left for home after the feast at Bisaasi-teri was over. The Patanowā-teri, in view of this, cut their stay short and left for home before the feast was over, hoping to avoid trouble with the Monou-teri.

Damowā was not satisfied, however, that he forced the Patanowā-teri to capitulate, leave for home, and not attempt to recover the two remaining women. He decided to raid them. In January of 1966 he and a party of men from Monou-teri raided the Patanowā-teri at the latter's village. They caught Bosibrei climbing a *rasha* tree, a prickly, cultivated palm that must be climbed slowly and with the aid of a pair of moveable stick frames in order to avoid getting pierced by the needle-sharp thorns that protrude from the tree's trunk (see Fig. 2-6). Bosibrei was almost to the top of the tree when the raiders caught him—he made an excellent target silhouetted against the sky. They shot and killed him with one volley of arrows as he reached for the fruits of the palm. One of